

Awake!

OCTOBER 2012



HOW TO SUCCEED AT SCHOOL



How to Succeed at School

Which word would *you* use to describe how you view school?

Boring or inspiring?

Frustrating or rewarding?

Stressful or enjoyable?

If your view of school is primarily negative, what can you do about it? If you have a positive view of school, how can you sharpen your skills so that you get even more out of your education? Using the Bible as a guide, on pages 3 through 7, we will outline five keys to success.

Many of the principles discussed in this series apply whether you attend public school or private school or are homeschooled.

Awake!

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How to Succeed at School

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Get Motivated

To be motivated in any endeavor, you need to see its practical value.

WHAT is the practical value of school? It will help you acquire wisdom, and the Bible says that “wisdom is for a protection.” (Ecclesiastes 7:12) How so? To illustrate: Imagine that you are walking through a dangerous neighborhood. Which would you prefer—to be wandering alone or to be with a group of friends who could protect you if necessary? With a good education, you have several strong “friends” always at your side. These include:

Thinking ability. Going to school can help you develop what the Bible calls “common sense and sound judgment.” (Proverbs 3:21, *Contemporary English Version*) Acquiring these skills will help you to solve your own problems instead of always having to rely on others to bail you out.

Social skills. The Bible admonishes Christians to cultivate such qualities as long-suffering and self-control. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Mixing with a variety of people at school gives you plenty of opportunity to master those qualities, along with tolerance, respect, and empathy—traits that will serve you well in adulthood.

Practical training. School can teach you the value of having a strong work ethic, which will help you to get a job and keep it. Also, the more you learn about the world around you, the better equipped you will be to know who you are and what you believe. (Proverbs 14:15) Armed with such conviction, you will be able to stand up for your beliefs respectfully.—1 Peter 3:15.

The bottom line: Since you need an education, it will do you little good to dwell on the things you dislike about school. Instead, get motivated by considering the incentives noted above. You may even be able to think of a few more!

Why not get started? Think of your greatest incentive for succeeding at school.



Good teachers are appreciated!

“My high-school economics teacher could have been working at a financial institution, but instead he chose to teach at our inner-city high school—a place where most kids didn’t care about economics. Still, he taught the subject simply, with humor, and in a way that related to us. One time he even called my mom to tell her how well I did on an essay. When students asked him why he taught at our school, he said it was the best place he had ever worked. He understood us, he was concerned about us, and he commended us. He was the best teacher I ever had!”—Reyon, United States.



Get Organized

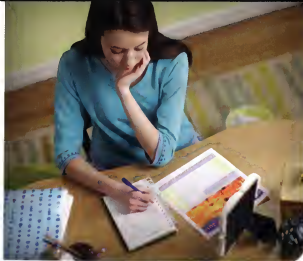
The small effort it takes to get organized can lead to a huge payoff—more time, less stress, and better grades.

IMAGINE that you walk into a store to buy a single item, but all the merchandise is randomly scattered about with no sense of order. How long will it take you to find what you are looking for? Would you not find it easier if the items were neatly arranged and the aisles were clearly labeled? You can take a similar approach to your schooling. How?

Establish a schedule. “One time I completely forgot about my homework—and neglected my chores—because I was at a friend’s house for the entire weekend,” says 18-year-old Zachary, from the United States. “On Monday, I had to beg my teachers to let me turn in my work late. Now I make to-do lists, which help me to remember what I need to get done.”

Writing things down also helped Celestine, a young woman in Papua New Guinea. Reflecting on her school days, she says: “I kept a schedule of all my activities, including homework, exams, and social events. Doing this helped me to set priorities and meet my deadlines.”

Tip: Write your to-do list in a small notebook, or store it on your cell phone or other electronic device.



Do not procrastinate. It is easy to say, “I’ll do it later.” It is better to do things as soon as possible—especially your homework.

Tip: Make it a point to do your homework as soon as you get home, before turning on the TV or engaging in any other recreation.

Organize your gear. Have you ever arrived at class only to discover that you forgot your notepad, pen, or books? You can avoid the hassle! How? “I always packed my schoolbag in advance,” says Aung Myo Myat, a young man in Myanmar.

Tip: Keep your schoolbag or backpack neat and orderly so that you can find things more easily.

The bottom line: Getting organized will save you the stress of forgetting things, running late, and never seeming to have enough time for other priorities.

Why not get started? Think about one area in which you need to get organized. Then, with a parent or a friend, brainstorm some ways that you can improve.

Awake!® **THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED** for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today’s problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator’s promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

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Get Help

Having a support system is not only vital while you are at school but also indispensable in your future endeavors as an adult.



WHO can help you in your efforts to succeed at school?

Family. “When I needed help with my homework,” says Bruna, an 18-year-old girl in Brazil, “my dad would explain the material and ask leading questions. But he let me find the answers myself.”*

Tip: To get started, ask your parent how well he or she did with the subject that you find challenging. If that parent did well, he or she may be just the person to help you.

Teachers. Most teachers are happy to know that a student genuinely wants to succeed, and they would be glad to give assistance.

Tip: Simply tell your teacher, “I’m struggling with this class, but I want to succeed. What would you recommend?”

Mentors. Perhaps a trusted family friend can help you. Such an arrangement can have a twofold benefit: First, you will get the assistance you need; and second, you will learn to rely on support when necessary—a practice that will benefit you in adulthood. The fact is, success in most endeavors is a team effort, not a solo performance.—Prov-erbs 15:22.

* An older sibling might be able to help you as well.

Tip: Ask your parents about who might be a good mentor for you.

The bottom line: There is nothing wrong with asking for help!

Why not get started? Make a list of two or three role models—people whom you look up to. Would any of those individuals be in a position to help you with your schoolwork?

“My favorite teacher”

“My favorite teacher was really strict, but everyone respected him. He was enthusiastic. He gestured and walked from one side of the room to the other as he spoke. He got everyone involved in class discussions. If you didn’t understand a point, he patiently explained it until you *did* understand. He repeatedly told us that he *welcomed* our questions. He said that questions would not only help him see what we didn’t understand but also help him become a better teacher. He took a personal interest in everyone. Many students chose to pursue a career in accounting—the field he taught—after spending just one year in his class!”—*Alana, Australia.*

LANGUAGES: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional) (audio Mandarin only), Chitonga, Cimbria, Croatian, Czech,* Danish,* Dutch,* English,* Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,* French,* Georgian, German,* Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,* Japanese,* Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Kirgiz, Kikundi, Korean,* Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malayag, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,* Polish,* Portuguese,* Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian,* Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silco, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian,* Spanish,* Swahili, Swedish,* Tagalog,* Tamil, Thai, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

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Stay Healthy

*Taking care of your health
can improve your
performance at school
—and your quality of life.*

IT ONLY makes sense to take care of the body that God gave you. (Psalm 139:14) To illustrate: Imagine that you own a car, but you never take time to maintain it. The car will only go so far before it breaks down. The same can happen to your body. What kind of “maintenance” do you need?

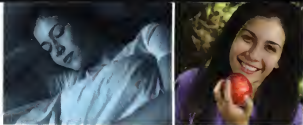
Rest. Skipping on sleep can make you look haggard and leave you feeling lethargic, confused, and even depressed. In contrast, getting sufficient rest will give you more energy. It can also accelerate your physical growth, improve your brain function, boost your immune system, and enhance your emotional well-being. That is quite a return for something that requires so little effort!

Tip: If possible, try to go to bed at the same time each night.

Nutrition. Teens grow rapidly. Between the ages of 10 and 17, for example, most boys double their lean body weight. Girls experience a growth spurt too. Growing bodies need plenty of raw materials and energy. Make sure that you give your body the nutrition it needs.

Tip: Do not skip breakfast. ‘Fueling up’ before class can help you improve your concentration and your short-term memory.

Exercise. The Bible acknowledges that “exercise is good for your body.” (1 Timothy 4:8, *Contemporary English Version*) It can strengthen your muscles and bones, improve your stamina, control your weight, increase your mental capabilities, boost your immunity, alleviate stress, and lift your mood. Of



course, exercise can also be fun, since it can include activities you enjoy!

The bottom line: Adequate sleep, balanced nutrition, and moderate exercise will help you keep your “engine” running. And *that*, in turn, will help you upgrade your performance in the classroom.*

Why not get started? Establish a reasonable exercise routine. Track your sleeping habits and diet for a month, and note any improvements you need to make.

“When I go for a walk, I seem to get more energy—even if I was tired when I started out.”—Jason, New Zealand.

“My thinking is, God made food to fuel our bodies, and I want to put the best fuel in me!”—Jill, United States.

“I run three times a week, and I bike or walk twice a week. Exercise gives me more energy and releases stress.”—Grace, Australia.

* For more information on your health, see chapter 10 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 1, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.



Have a Goal

School becomes more meaningful
—and more enjoyable—when
you know where your
education is taking you.

GOING through school without a goal is like running a race on a track that has no finish line. The Bible says: “Know where you are headed.” (Proverbs 4:26, *Contemporary English Version*) Having a goal will keep you focused and make your transition to the working world smoother. How can you set a goal?

Ask yourself, ‘How do I plan to earn a living?’ Do not put off answering that question. Instead, plan early. Why? Think of it this way: If you wanted to go on a trip, first you would need to decide on your destination. Then you would look at a map and determine the best way to get there. You can take a similar approach to your schooling. Think about which occupation you will pursue, and then choose courses that will help you reach your destination.

Caution: Many young people are so determined to do *only* work that they feel most passionate about—becoming a professional musician, for example—that they find the thought of any other type of employment intolerable. What is a better approach?

1. *Consider your abilities.* For example, do you enjoy service-related tasks or being helpful to others? Are you good at mechanics? numbers? finances? fixing things?

2. *Consider your options.* Which occupations are a good match for your abilities? Brainstorm several options rather than focusing only on your “dream” job. And think *practically*. For example, will the field you want to pursue be available in other locations, in case



you should move? Will the training that is required put you in unreasonable debt?

3. *Consider your opportunities.* Once you know which occupation you would like to pursue, look at the market for that type of work locally. Do you know any potential employers? If so, do they offer apprenticeships? Are there vocational training programs available?

Tip: Consult your parents, teachers, and adult friends. Check out your local library and online resources.

The bottom line: If you have a goal, your education will have direction and purpose.

Why not get started? Think now, while you are still in school, about the three points noted above. Write down your goals, and discuss them with your parents.

You might have noticed that this series frequently referred to the Bible when outlining the keys to success at school. The publishers of this magazine, Jehovah's Witnesses, believe that the Bible contains “instruction for right living.” (2 Timothy 3: 16, *Good News Translation*) It is practical for everyday life—not only at school but also at work, in the family, and elsewhere. For more information on how the Bible can help you, visit the Web site www.jw.org and see page 32 of this magazine.

What Parents Can Do

"Too many students were crammed into a classroom! There were no fans, and the heat was suffocating."
—Luis, Bolivia.

"Our school had few teachers, so students didn't get personal attention. The school had no maps, no lab equipment, no library."
—Dorcus, Myanmar.

"Most of my teachers struggled to control the class. At times, students were very unruly, which made studying that much more difficult."—Nina, South Africa.

AS THE statements above show, some schools are anything but a haven for learning. As a parent, how can you help your children get the most from their education despite the challenges? Here are some suggestions.

Show initiative. Instead of focusing on the problems—many of which are likely out of your control—focus on what you *can* do. If your child seems unable to master a certain subject or is overwhelmed by the amount of homework he or she receives, try to brainstorm a few solutions together. For example, do you need to create a better study area at home? Does your child need help with setting up a schedule to get the most important tasks accomplished? Would he or she benefit by having the assistance of a tutor? For further suggestions, perhaps you could speak with your child's teacher and guidance counselor. View these people as your allies, not your adversaries.

Keep your child focused on the goal of education. Education should equip your child to grow into a well-rounded, responsible adult.

The goal should *not* be merely to learn how to acquire wealth. Yet, research shows that many young people pursue education with that very goal in mind—to get rich. The Bible promotes a balanced view of material things.

Education should equip your child to grow into a well-rounded, responsible adult

While it acknowledges that "money is for a protection," it also warns that "those who are determined to be rich" will not find real happiness.—Ecclesiastes 7:12; 1 Timothy 6:9.

Let your child learn through adversity. Many schoolteachers say that as difficult as their students can be to deal with, parents can be even worse. Some parents are quick to intervene and protest when their son or daughter gets in trouble or performs poorly on a test. For example, a *Time* magazine report tells of one college professor who has had students who "call their parents from the classroom on



View your child's teacher as your ally, not your adversary

a cell phone to complain about a low grade and then pass the phone over to her, in the middle of class, because the parent wanted to intervene. And she has had parents say they are paying a lot of money for their child's education and imply that anything but an A is an unacceptable return on their investment."

Many schoolteachers say that as difficult as their students can be to deal with, parents can be even worse

Such parents are doing their children no favors. In fact, instead of "rescuing" their children, they are preventing them from "having real experiences of decision making, failing, and cleaning up their own messes," writes Polly Young-Eisendrath in her book *The Self-Esteem Trap*. She adds: "If parents run too

much interference in problem solving for their children while the children sit back and do nothing, the parents will get stronger, but the children get weaker and fall over when they try to run on their own."

Be reasonable with regard to how much education to pursue. As mentioned earlier, education can help prepare your child for responsible adulthood. (Genesis 2:24) But how much schooling does reaching that goal require?

Do not assume that your child must attend a university to make a decent living. There are other options that are less costly. In fact, in some cases those with trade skills can make as good a living as university graduates.

The bottom line: Schools are not perfect, and children face challenges today that were unheard of just a few decades ago. But with your support, your child *can* succeed at school! As a family, why not discuss the suggestions found on pages 3 through 7 of this magazine?



Winning the War Against Obesity in the Young

ACCORDING to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, between 1980 and 2002, the number of overweight adolescents tripled and the number of overweight preteens more than doubled. Long-term increased risks associated with childhood obesity include high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and several types of cancer.*

Childhood obesity may be related to a number of factors, including a sedentary lifestyle, advertising campaigns directed at young people, and the availability and affordability of unhealthy foods. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control says: "Childhood obesity is the result of eating too many calories and not getting enough physical activity."

Children, adolescents, and adults would do well to take a close look at their eating habits. Without going to extremes, a few simple measures can make a difference. Consider, for example, a young man named Mark, who found that adjusting his eating habits brought enormous benefits to his health and well-being. "At one time I was a junk-food junkie," Mark admits. *Awake!* spoke with Mark to find out how he changed.

* The term "childhood obesity" refers to a medical condition that affects children and adolescents. Experts say that young people who are overweight have a 70 percent chance of being overweight as adults.

When did your problem with food begin?

When I graduated from high school. About that time, I began eating out a lot. There were two fast-food restaurants near the place where I worked, so I ate lunch at one or the other almost every day. I found it much easier to go to a fast-food restaurant than to prepare my own lunch.

What about when you moved away from home?

My eating habits got worse. I didn't know how to cook, and I didn't have much money; but my favorite fast-food restaurant was just two blocks away. Eating there seemed like the easiest and cheapest option. In addition to eating the wrong kind of food, I ate way too much food. I wasn't satisfied with a standard fast-food

meal. I ordered *more* French fries, a *larger* soft drink, and an extra hamburger—whatever I could afford—in the largest size available.

What was the turning point for you?

When I was in my early 20's, I started thinking more seriously about my health. I was overweight. I felt sluggish all the time, and I lacked self-confidence. I knew that I needed to make changes.

How did you get your eating under control?

I took a gradual approach. First, I reduced the amount of food I ate. I would tell myself, "This isn't my last meal; I can always eat again." At times I literally had to walk away from the dinner table. But I felt good afterward, as if I had won a victory.

Did you have to make any drastic adjustments?

Some things I gave up completely. For example, I eliminated soft drinks and drank only water. That was difficult. I loved soft drinks, and I hated water. After I drank a glass of water, I would take a couple of sips of juice, which put some flavor on my palate. After a while, water itself became more appealing.

What did you do besides eliminating unhealthy foods?

I replaced them with better options. I started with fruits—apples, bananas, straw-

berries, blueberries, raspberries, and melons. I also added lean proteins to my diet, such as chicken or tuna. In time, those foods became some of my favorites. I try to eat more vegetables and less of the rest of the main course. I find that I'm less likely to overeat at mealtime if I have healthy snacks between meals. Over time, my craving for junk food has diminished.

Did you completely give up eating out?

No, I still do go out to eat occasionally. But when I do, I control how much I eat. If the portion I'm served is too big, I ask for a take-out box. Then I put half of the meal in the box before I start eating. That way, I consume a reasonable

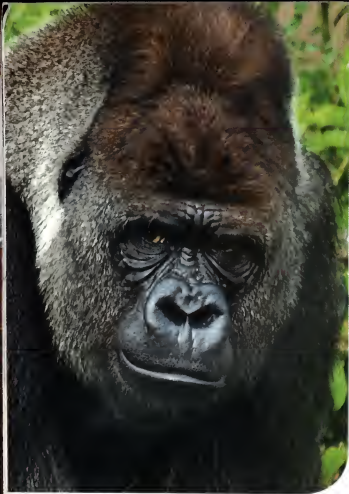
portion instead of eating more, simply because I feel guilty about leaving food on my plate.

How have you benefited from the adjustments you have made?

I've lost weight, and I have more energy. I feel better about myself. Best of all, I'm happy to know that by taking care of my health, I'm honoring the God who gave me the gift of life. (Psalm 36:9) I used to think that living a healthy lifestyle would be boring. But now that I've started to eat right, I wouldn't trade it for the world!*

* Awake! does not endorse any particular diet. Each individual should carefully evaluate options and consult a physician before making personal decisions regarding nutrition. Avoid fad diets that are potentially dangerous.





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AFRICA



CENTRAL AFRICAN
REPUBLIC

Dzanga-Ndoki National Park

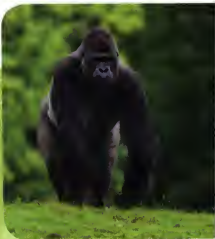
Face-to-Face With Lowland Gorillas

DEEP in the equatorial rain forest of the Central African Republic lies a natural treasure that few have ever seen. We endured a 12-hour drive over rough trails to reach the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park, a pristine wildlife reserve in the southwest corner of the country, between Cameroon and Republic of the Congo. Our goal was to meet Makumba, a western lowland gorilla, and Makumba's family.

Our guide told us to stay together and to be on the lookout for elephants, since we would be hiking on trails that they used daily to search for food. But elephants weren't our only concern. "If a gorilla charges you," our guide warned us, "stand still and look at the ground. He won't hurt you; he'll just make a lot of noise. Don't make eye contact with him. In fact, I find it helps just to close my eyes."

Along with our guide, we were led by a tracker from the BaAka people, considered a Pygmy group because of their physical traits and short stature.

A western lowland gorilla can grow to 6 feet (1.8 m) tall and weigh over 440 pounds (200 kg)



© Juan Carlos Muñoz/age fotostock

GORILLA LIFE

Gorillas build their ponderous bodies one shoot, branch, and leaf at a time, our guide explained. They also eat insects and seasonal fruits and can travel up to 2.4 miles (4 km) a day in search of food. The family may sleep on the ground or build nests in trees. The dominant male is called a silverback, since the fur on his back grays with age. The silverback usually sleeps on the ground to protect his family.

To help the gorillas become accustomed to humans, trackers visit them every day for at least five years. Habituated gorillas, as they are called, may then be visited by tourists, whose park entry fees help pay for research and for the conservation of this endangered species.

Actual size of an adult gorilla's hand. How does the size of your hand compare?



By means of the faintest sights, smells, and sounds, the skilled native tracker can detect the presence of the most elusive animals. Swarms of maddening sweat bees surrounded us. We struggled to keep up as he strode with ease through the dense vegetation.

Soon our tracker was taking us through virgin forest where few Westerners have ever trod. Then, abruptly, he stopped and waved his arms over a large area near our path. There we could see crushed bushes and matted grass where young gorillas had been playing, as well as broken and stripped branches—the remnants of a midmorning snack. Our anticipation mounted as we continued on.

After about two miles (3 km), the tracker slowed his pace. To avoid startling the gorillas, he made a clack-clack noise with his tongue. Close by, we could hear deep grunts punctuated by snapping branches. Our guide slowly waved us forward. With a finger to her lips, she indicated absolute silence. She told us to crouch and pointed through the trees. About 26 feet (8 m) ahead, we saw him—it was Makumba!

The once boisterous forest was now quiet, and all we could hear was the beating of our hearts. Of course, the question on our minds was, Would Makumba charge? Makumba

turned his leathery face in our direction and, after what seemed to be a casual evaluation, welcomed us with a yawn. Needless to say, we were relieved!

Although in the Aka language the name Makumba means “Speedy,” during our time together, Makumba simply enjoyed a leisurely morning meal. Nearby, two juveniles wrestled and tickled each other. Sopo, a saucer-eyed ten-month-old, played near his mother, Mopambi, who gently pulled him back whenever his boundless curiosity led him out of arm’s reach. The rest of the family either stripped leaves and pith from branches or frolicked in groups, briefly glancing at us before losing interest and resuming their play.

After an hour, our time was up. Makumba seemed to feel the same, and with a single grunt, he hoisted himself up with his massive arms and moved off into the forest. Within seconds, the entire family vanished. Though we could spend only a short time with these magnificent creatures, the experience will stay with us for many years to come.

ANSWERS TO PAGES 30 AND 31
1. Ladder in scene 3. 2. Spiderweb in scene 2.
3. 152,000. 4. C.

The Sensors of the Black Fire Beetle

● Forest fires repel most animals, but they attract black fire beetles. Why? Because newly burned trees are an ideal place for these insects to lay their eggs. Furthermore, fire drives away predators, leaving the beetle free to eat, mate, and lay eggs safely. But how do black fire beetles find forest fires in the first place?

Consider: Next to its middle legs, the fire beetle has sensors called pit organs that can detect infrared radiation from a forest fire. The radiation generates heat in the pit organs and then directs the beetle to head for the flames.

But these beetles have other sensors in their fire-detection tool kit. When their favorite trees burn, the beetles' antennae detect minute quantities of certain chemicals that fires release into the air. According to some researchers, black fire beetles can use their "smoke detector" antennae to find a single smoldering tree over half a mile (0.8 km) away. As a result of the combination of their abilities, these beetles appear to sense and find forest fires from a distance of more than 30 miles (48.3 km)!

Researchers are looking to the black fire beetle's pit organs and antennae to improve devices that detect infrared radiation and fire. Traditional high-resolution



The beetle's infrared receptors

Infrared sensors must be cooled, so the beetle may help scientists to develop better sensors that will function at room temperature. The beetle's antennae have inspired engineers to develop fire-detection systems that are more sensitive and can distinguish between the by-products of forest fires and other chemical compounds.

Researchers are astounded by the black fire beetle's unique way of finding a place to lay its eggs. "How did these beetles develop their ability to lay eggs this way?" asks E. Richard Hoebeke, a beetle expert at Cornell University, in the United States. "Think about how little we know of insects with incredibly sensitive and complex sensory mechanisms."

What do you think? Did the black fire beetle's ability to detect forest fires come about by evolution? Or was it designed?

Photo of beetle: © Stephen Luk; infrared receptors: © Volker Siegel/Photo Researchers, Inc.



YOUNG PEOPLE ASK

What can I expect from marriage? **PART 2**



IN OUR PREVIOUS ISSUE, we considered some of the benefits and challenges you can expect from marriage.

IN THIS ISSUE, we'll discuss why you need to expect the unexpected.

Put a ✓ next to any boxes that apply, and then number those that you checked in the order of their importance to you.

I expect my future spouse to . . .

☐☐

be physically attractive

☐☐

make me feel good about myself

☐☐

have the same goals that I have

☐☐

enjoy the same type of recreation that I enjoy

If you're looking for a marriage mate, there's nothing wrong with having the expectations noted on the previous page. You might even find someone who meets *all* of them. Realistically, though, over time people change—and so do circumstances.

The bottom line: To make a success of marriage, you must *expect the unexpected*.

The good news. Some unexpected aspects of marriage may come as a pleasant surprise.

"Now that we're married, I see Maria's sense of humor in a way that I never fully appreciated while we were dating. Because we don't take ourselves too seriously, even the problems we've encountered seem less significant."*
—Mark.

The not-so-good news. Some unexpected aspects of marriage may be unpleasant. Consider an example.

* Some names in this article have been changed.

● Suppose you and your future spouse have a goal to do missionary work in a foreign land. But what if, after marriage, your mate develops a serious health problem that puts the goal out of reach? Realistically, that's possible, as the Bible says that "bad things happen to everyone!" (Ecclesiastes 9:11, *Holy Bible—Easy-to-Read Version*) No doubt you'd be distressed over your mate's condition—and disappointed over not reaching your goal. If such an unexpected circumstance arose, however, you'd simply have to accept reality and adjust. After all, you married a person, not a goal.

The bottom line: As the Bible states, those who marry will have a measure of "tribulation." (1 Corinthians 7:28) Sometimes that tribulation comes from unexpected circumstances.

How can you prepare for the unexpected? If you get married, you'll need two things.

WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY



Sirvan—Sometimes people who date choose to overlook red flags about their prospective mate. That's dangerous. You could end up married and unhappy and left with the feeling that the only way to be happy again is to divorce the person you once thought you couldn't live without.



Danielle—Many people get married simply because they think it's expected of them to marry by a certain age. On the other hand, I've heard people say that there's wisdom in waiting, since young people change in many ways. Even happily married people have said that they wished they had waited a little longer.

1. A REALISTIC OUTLOOK

No matter how compatible you and your future spouse may be, you should expect that

- you will not always agree on everything.
- you will not always have the same priorities.
- you will not always enjoy the same activities.
- you will not always feel euphorically in love.

Situations such as those listed above are common. But they will not ruin your marriage *unless you let them!* Remember, the Bible says that love “endures all things” and “never fails.”—1 Corinthians 13:4, 7, 8.

Fact of life: In the end, it's not *the problems* you encounter but *how you deal with them* that will make or break your marriage.—Colossians 3:13.

2. A SENSE OF COMMITMENT

If you and your spouse are determined to stay together, come what may, you'll be better able to weather the unexpected storms.—Matthew 19:6.

Some claim that commitment makes a marriage burdensome. Really, though, it does the opposite! Commitment gives your relationship stability. When the unexpected occurs, you and your spouse will look for solutions, not for the nearest exit.

To cultivate a spirit of commitment, you'll need to think about marriage rationally rather than idealistically. To illustrate the difference, try the following exercise.

WHY NOT ASK YOUR PARENTS?

What unexpected blessings and challenges did you face when you were newly married? How can I prepare for the unexpected if I get married?



1. Imagine that you have a free airline ticket to travel *anywhere in the world*. Which destination would you choose, and why?

Destination:
Reason:

- scenery — culture
— climate — recreation — other

2. Imagine that your airline ticket is *one-way* and that your destination will be your permanent residence.

Now which destination—if any—would you choose?

Destination:
or

— I would stay where I am.

In the above exercise, your first and second destination choices probably differ. Even if they're the same, likely you had to *think* differently about your second choice. Rather than imagine yourself as a vacationer who's lounging on a beach or hiking in the mountains, you had to think of yourself as a resident who is facing both the benefits and the challenges of daily life.

That's how you need to think about marriage. After all, with the passing of time, circumstances may change. No doubt you and your spouse will too. Much of your success will depend on your ability to expect the unexpected and to deal with it when it arises.

To think about: How well do you deal with unexpected situations in life right now, as a single person?

Find more help for teens at the Web site
www.jw.org

Disturbing News Reports and Your Children



"My 11-year-old daughter doesn't like watching the news. She often has nightmares about what she has seen. One time, she watched a report about a person who decapitated a family member. That night she dreamed that she too was being decapitated."—Quinn.

"My six-year-old niece saw reports of tornadoes from elsewhere in the country. For weeks afterward, she was terrified. She would call me on the phone, convinced that a tornado was coming her way and that she was going to die."
—Paige.

DO NEWS reports frighten your child? In one survey, nearly 40 percent of parents said that their children had been upset by something they saw in the news and that, as a result, the children had feared that a similar event would happen to them or their loved ones.

Why? One factor is that children often interpret the news differently from adults. For example, small children may believe that a tragedy that is *broadcast* repeatedly is really *happening* repeatedly.

A second factor is that daily reports of disturbing events can distort a child's view of the world. True, we live in "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) But repeated exposure to disturbing news reports can cause children to develop immobilizing fears. "Children who watch a lot of TV news tend to overestimate the prevalence of crime and may perceive the world to be a more dangerous place than it actually is," observes the Kaiser Family Foundation.



PROTECT



If disturbing news reports are affecting your children, what can you do? Here are a few suggestions.

Protect them. Based on the age, maturity, and emotional makeup of your children, consider setting limits on the amount of exposure they have to the news. Of course, in our information age, children are not ignorant of current events. Even little children may see or hear more than you realize. Therefore, be alert to any signs of fear or anxiety that your children may display.

Educate them. As your children get older, consider watching the news *with* them. In that setting, you can use the news as an opportunity to teach. Try to emphasize any positive aspects of a report—for example, relief efforts be-

ing made to help victims of some disaster.

Reassure them. When a disturbing event is reported, draw out your children to find out how they feel about what happened. "My wife and I take the time to explain to our son, Nathaniel, what he has seen on the news, as well as what precautions we've taken to avoid the same tragedy ourselves," says a father named Michael. "One time, when Nathaniel saw news footage of a house burning to the ground, he feared that our home would be next. To comfort him, we showed him all the smoke alarms in our house. He knows where they are and why they're there. That helped him feel secure."

Maintain perspective. Researchers have found that people tend to judge



REASSURE

"Children ages 3-7 are more frightened by stories of natural disasters and accidents, whereas older children ages 8-12 are more scared by stories about crime and violence."—Kaiser Family Foundation

the *likelihood* of an event by the ease with which examples of that event come to mind. For instance, if you recently heard that a child was abducted, you are likely to conclude that the threat to your child is greater than it is. Of course, it is good to be aware of potential dangers. Nevertheless, experts say that media reports can make us fear events that will probably never happen to us.—Proverbs 22: 3, 13.

If parents fail to maintain a balanced perspective of the news, they could take fears to an extreme. So could their children. For example, in 2005 an 11-year-old boy got lost in the mountains of Utah in the United States. He was so afraid of kidnapers that he hid from his rescuers for

four days. When rescue workers finally found the child, he was weak and dehydrated. Even though the odds of being taken by a stranger were about 1 in 350,000, the boy's fears led him to risk starvation rather than accept help.

The lesson? Make sure that you and your children maintain a balanced perspective of the news. The fact is, many calamities are viewed as newsworthy because they are relatively rare—not because they are common.

Crime, violence, and natural disasters are tragic realities of our times. As we have seen, however, your efforts to protect, educate, reassure, and provide a balanced perspective will help your children cope with disturbing reports.

THE BIBLE'S VIEWPOINT

Do the Stars Affect Your Life?

Does he love me?

Should I travel today?

Will I get that job?



TO ANSWER questions such as those above, many turn to astrology.* But do the stars really affect your life? Can they help you learn about your future, or about yourself? What does the Bible say?

Can the Stars Influence Our Future?

Some people believe that we cannot escape our destiny. The future has already been

* Astrology is the study of the sun, moon, planets, and stars, with the belief that these heavenly bodies have an influence on us and can help us to understand ourselves.

written, they say, and the stars can reveal it. But the Bible indicates otherwise. It tells us that God gives people a choice, which implies that they have a certain degree of control over what happens to them. For example, he told the Israelites: "I have put life and death before you, the blessing and the malediction; and you must *choose life* in order that you may keep alive, you and your offspring." —Deuteronomy 30:19.

With those words, Jehovah God made it clear to his people that they had a large degree

of control over their future. If they obeyed his commands, they would experience blessings. If they disobeyed, they would bring hardship upon themselves.

Consider: If the future of each Israelite had already been written in the stars, would it make sense for God to urge them to *choose* life? Would it even be fair for God to hold them accountable for actions over which they had no control?

The lesson from the Bible is clear: Our life course depends on the choices we make—not on the stars.—Galatians 6:7.

Can the Stars Influence Our Personality?

Most astrologers downplay the idea of predestination. "We control our own destiny," claims one, but he adds: "On the other hand, the time of our birth has an influence on the structure of our personality." Many people believe similarly. They feel that since the stars and planets exert a *physical* influence on our earth, why would they not also have a *metaphysical* effect? What does the Bible indicate?

The Bible is not a scientific textbook, spelling out every detail about the human body and the universe. However, it does explain the purpose for which Jehovah created the heavenly bodies. Genesis 1:14, 15 states: "God said, 'I command lights to appear in the sky and to separate day from night and to show the time for seasons . . . I command them to shine on the earth.'"—*Contemporary English Version*.

Consider: If God had designed the stars to influence our personality, would he not have told us so?

What can we conclude? That the stars are part of God's creative work but do not influence our personality.

A Better Approach

If we desire to learn about our future or understand ourselves, that is commendable.

But there is a better place to look than to the stars.

The Bible describes Jehovah God as "the One telling from the beginning the finale." (Isaiah 46:10) He has a purpose, which he will bring to success. (Isaiah 55:10, 11) We can learn about God's purpose by reading the Bible. This ancient sacred book also explains why we suffer and how God will bring an end to the very conditions that plague mankind.* —2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-4.

When it comes to learning about and improving ourselves, the Bible is the best place to look for guidance. Why? Because reading it helps us to take an honest look at ourselves. For example, the Bible states that Jehovah God is "merciful," "slow to anger," and "ready to forgive." (Exodus 34:6; Psalm 86:5) But are we like that? The Bible can expose our erroneous thinking and help us see where we need to improve.

Therefore, we do not need to look to the stars to learn about our future or about ourselves. A better approach is to look to the Bible, which is "inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight."—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

* For more information on God's purpose, see chapter 3 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- Why did God create the heavenly bodies?—Genesis 1:14.
- How can you take a more objective view of your personality?—Hebrews 4:12.
- How can you know for sure what the future holds?—Isaiah 46:10.

Fulfilling Your Role as a Parent

Do you remember the moment when you held your newborn for the first time?

Before long, you may have felt overwhelmed, realizing that your child's need for guidance would continue for many years. The enormity of your responsibility quickly sank in.



WHILE the role of a parent has always been challenging, it is especially so today. Why? Because the world is more complex than it was when you were a child. Some of the moral challenges children confront—when using the Internet, for example—did not even exist just a few decades ago.

How can you help your child to deal with the moral pitfalls of this modern world? Following are three suggestions.

1 Clearly state your values. As children grow, they are buried in an avalanche of misinformation about morals—some of it from their peers and much of it from the media. Such negative influences become especially evident when children enter the teen years. However, research shows that when it comes to major decisions in life, many adolescents place higher value on their parents' viewpoints than on those of their peers.

What you can do. Parents in ancient Israel were encouraged to talk with their children frequently in order to inculcate upright values in them. (Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7) Do the same with your child. For example, if you live by the Bible's moral standards, tell your child *why* you feel that adhering to those standards leads to the best way of life.

2 **Help your child understand consequences.** The Bible states: "Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7) The principle of cause and effect can be observed in virtually every aspect of life. Think back to your own childhood. No doubt the most memorable lessons you learned were those in which you had to face the consequences of your actions.

What you can do. Using real-life examples, explain to your child how those who adopted a wrong course suffered or how those who did the right thing benefited. (Luke 17:31, 32; Hebrews 13:7) Also, do not shield your child from the consequences of his or her own mistakes. Suppose, for example, that your son carelessly breaks a toy belonging to another boy. You could require that your son give one of his own toys to him. Your child will not quickly forget this lesson on respecting the belongings of others.

3 **Build positive traits.** A Bible proverb states: "Children show what they are by what they do; you can tell if they are honest and good." (Proverbs 20:11, *Good News Translation*) As children grow, they develop a pattern of conduct that characterizes them. Sadly, some become known for their negative traits. (Psalm 58:3) But others build a solid, praiseworthy reputation. For example, the apostle Paul wrote to a congregation regarding the young man Timothy: "I have no one else of a disposition like his who will genuinely care for the things pertaining to you."—Philippians 2:20.

What you can do. In addition to emphasizing consequences, as mentioned earlier, help your child think about the character traits for which he or she would like to be known. When faced with a challenge, young people can learn to make good decisions by asking themselves the following questions:

- What type of person do I want to be?—Colossians 3:10.
- What would a person like that do in this situation?—Proverbs 10:1.

The Bible contains many true-life examples of men and women whose actions defined them as being either good or bad. (1 Corinthians 10:11; James 5:10, 11) Use these examples to help your son or daughter build positive character traits.

The publications of Jehovah's Witnesses can help you see how to apply Bible principles in your family and how to help your children do the same.

To Help Your Family

For young children:
My Book of Bible Stories



For preteens:
Learn From the Great Teacher



For teenagers:
*Questions Young People Ask
—Answers That Work,
Volumes 1 and 2*



For adults:
*The Secret of
Family Happiness*



This eight-part series in "Awake!" is examining an outstanding feature of the Bible—its prophecies, or predictions. The articles will help you to answer these questions: Are Bible prophecies merely the work of clever humans? Do they bear the hallmark of divine inspiration? We invite you to weigh the evidence.



"The Last Days"

WE LIVE in difficult times. From all parts of the earth, we hear a steady stream of news describing calamities and social unrest. Is there any special significance to the current world situation?

Some 2,000 years ago, the Bible foretold that the world's troubles would climax in "the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 24:3) This does not mean "the end of the world" as people fear it. Rather, the Bible describes a pattern of events and attitudes, or a sign, that would occur during a time period called "the last days." (2 Timothy 3:1) Jesus told his followers that when they saw "these things occurring," relief would soon follow. (Luke 21:31) Consider some of the prophecies that mark our time as unique.

Prophecy 1: "Nation will rise against nation."
—Matthew 24:7.

Fulfillment: In the early years of the 20th century, many were expecting continued peace. The start of World War I shocked the world and began an era of unprecedented warfare. As the Bible book of Revelation foretold, peace was taken "away from the earth so that they [mankind] should slaughter one another."—Revelation 6:4.

What the evidence reveals:

- "The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 still seems to mark the end of an era and the beginning of a new one."—*The Origins of the First World War*, published in 1992.
- Although the catastrophic death toll of World War I cannot be precisely determined, one encyclopedia estimates that military deaths alone totaled 8,500,000.
- World War II was far more deadly, with figures varying from some 35 million to 60 million soldiers and civilians killed.

● Between the end of the second world war and 2010, there were 246 armed conflicts in 151 locations worldwide.

Prophecy 2: *"There will be food shortages."*
—Matthew 24:7.

Fulfillment: Famine caused more than 70 million deaths in the 20th century and continues to be a global problem.

What the evidence reveals:

● According to the United Nations, hunger is the world's greatest health risk, and 1 in 7 people worldwide currently do not have enough to eat.

● "Today's food shortages are not the result of one-time, weather-driven crop failures but rather of four critical long-term trends: rapid population growth, loss of topsoil, spreading water shortages and rising temperatures."—*Scientific American*.

Prophecy 3: *"There will be great earthquakes."*
—Luke 21:11.

Fulfillment: Because more people live in earthquake-prone areas, the number of lives lost or disrupted as a result of earthquakes has sharply increased.

What the evidence reveals:

● The *World Disasters Report 2010* says: "Of all large disasters, seismic events have killed the greatest number of people in recent years."

● Each year, from 1970 to 2001, there was an average of 19 earthquake disasters* reported, with an average death toll of 19,547. In the ten years before 2012, the average increased to 28 earthquake disasters per year, with an average death toll of 67,954.

* The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters defines an earthquake "disaster" as a seismic event that results in at least one of the following: 10 or more people killed, 100 or more people affected, the declaration of a state of emergency, or a call for international assistance.

Prophecy 4: *"In one place after another pestilences."*—Luke 21:11.

Fulfillment: Despite medical advances, millions still die each year as a result of infectious diseases. International travel and the world's growing urban population have increased the likelihood that disease outbreaks will spread rapidly.

What the evidence reveals:

● Smallpox killed an estimated 300 million to 500 million people in the 20th century.

● The Worldwatch Institute reports that during the past three decades, "more than thirty previously unrecognized diseases such as Ebola, HIV, Hantavirus, and SARS have emerged as new threats."

● The World Health Organization has warned of the rise of drug-resistant germs, saying: "The world is heading towards a post-antibiotic era, in which many common infections will no longer have a cure and, once again, [will] kill unabated."

Prophecy 5: *People will "betray one another and will hate one another. . . . The love of the greater number will cool off."*—Matthew 24:10, 12.

Fulfillment: Hate-fueled genocide has claimed the lives of millions. In numerous countries, armed conflicts and crime have led to cycles of increasing fear and violence.

What the evidence reveals:

● The Nazi regime killed six million Jews and millions of others. Regarding the reaction of ordinary citizens, author Zygmunt Bauman observes: "Mass destruction was accompanied not by the uproar of emotions, but the dead silence of unconcern."

● According to BBC News, it is estimated that some 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed within just a few months. One

researcher estimates that some 200,000 people participated in the mass murder.

- Each year, more than 740,000 people die as a result of crime and armed conflict.

Prophecy 6: *"Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . having no natural affection."*—2 Timothy 3:2, 3.

Fulfillment: Our era is one of greed and a lack of moral restraint. Such attitudes have fostered numerous social problems.

What the evidence reveals:

- A UNICEF UK report on child welfare says that parents and children in the United Kingdom "seemed to be locked into a compulsive consumption cycle." Families buy material goods "in an attempt to compensate for relationship problems and social insecurity."

- An estimated 275 million children worldwide are exposed to domestic violence in the home.

- "In the United States alone, over 500,000 older adults are believed to be abused or neglected each year."—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Prophecy 7: *"This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth."*—Matthew 24:14.

Fulfillment: The Bible teaches that God's Kingdom is a real government, ruling from heaven with Jesus as King. This heavenly Kingdom will "crush and put an end to all [human governments], and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44.

God's Kingdom—both what it is and what it will do—is the central message taught by Jehovah's Witnesses earth wide.

What the evidence reveals:

- Worldwide, Jehovah's Witnesses, numbering more than seven million in more than 230 lands, teach others about God's Kingdom.

- In print and online, Jehovah's Witnesses have made Bible-based information available in over 500 languages.

The Sign and Your Future

After examining the evidence, millions have concluded that the Bible's sign of the last days is now being fulfilled. As the first six articles in this series have shown, history proves that the Bible is indeed a book of unerring prophecy.

You can also have confidence in what the Bible foretells for the future. These prophecies will affect *you*, for God promises to bring an end to these traumatic last days. The remaining two articles in this series will explain how "the last days" will end and will also tell of the wonderful future ahead for the earth and mankind.

*In fulfillment of Matthew 24:14,
Jehovah's Witnesses preach the
good news of God's Kingdom*



The Stresses of City Life

Research indicates that “city dwellers respond more violently to stress than do people from small towns,” says the Polish magazine *Przekrój*. “Cities are places of exposure to an excessive number of stimuli,” explains psychotherapist Mieczysław Jaskulski of Warsaw’s Psychoeducation Laboratory. “For city dwellers, the risk of anxiety attacks is 21 percent higher than for those living in the countryside, and for mood disorders, 39 percent higher.” How can city dwellers cope? “Do not get upset about things that are beyond your control,” “leave work at work,” “go out for a walk,” and “do not be afraid to take a vacation,” suggests *Przekrój*.

How Much Does Facebook Retain?

An Austrian law student wanted to know how much data about him had been stored by the world’s largest social network during his three-year membership, so he requested a copy. Facebook sent him a CD containing 1,222 pages of data. As reported by the German newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel*, the student said: “Everything had been stored—every message, every chat, including sensitive information about friends.” Included was information that he was sure he had deleted!



“Nearly half of cancers diagnosed in the [United Kingdom] each year—over 130,000 in total—are **caused by avoidable life choices** including smoking, drinking and eating the wrong things.”—BBC NEWS, BRITAIN.

“An immense, increasingly sophisticated illegal trade in wildlife parts conducted by organized crime [is] **decimating the world’s most beloved species . . .** on a scale never before seen.”—WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY, U.S.A.

People who on average spend six hours each day watching TV can expect to live 4.8 years less than those who watch no TV. Put another way, **every hour of TV reduces a sedentary adult’s life expectancy by about 22 minutes.**—BRITISH JOURNAL OF SPORTS MEDICINE, BRITAIN.

In Germany, over 90 percent of women whose unborn child is **diagnosed with Down syndrome opt for an abortion.**—DER TAGESSPIEGEL, GERMANY.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM . . . Noah?

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW
IMPORTANT IT IS TO OBEY GOD?

- Color the pictures. • Read the Bible verses, and summarize them as you fill in the missing dialogue.
- Find the hidden items: (1) a ladder and (2) a spiderweb.

• "FOR FAMILY REVIEW" answers on page 14

GOD TOLD NOAH: "MAKE

—GENESIS 6:14

GOD GAVE SPECIFIC
INSTRUCTIONS.
—GENESIS 6:15, 16

GENESIS 6:19, 20

GENESIS 6:22

NOAH "....."

Why was Noah's obedience to God important?

CLUE: Jeremiah 7:23; 2 Peter 2:5.

What will help you to obey God?

CLUE: 1 Chronicles 28:9; Isaiah 48:17, 18;
1 John 5:3.

What do you learn from this account?

What do you think? In order to obey God,
to whom else must you be obedient?

CLUE: Ephesians 6:1-3; Hebrews 13:7, 17.

To print out additional copies of "For Family Review,"
go to www.jw.org

GENESIS 7:17, 23

Collect and Learn

Cut out, fold in half, and save



NEHEMIAH

BIBLE
CARD

22



QUESTIONS

- A. Nehemiah served as _____ to Persian King _____.
- B. What does Nehemiah's name mean?
- C. He prayed: "Do remember me, O my God, _____."

1 C.E. 98 C.E.

Last Bible book written
Lived about 450 B.C.E.

4026 B.C.E.

Adam created



NEHEMIAH

PROFILE He temporarily left a prominent job in order to do Jehovah's work. As governor of the Jews, Nehemiah took the lead in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls, which were put up in only 52 days. (Nehemiah 6:15) His example of courage and prayer teaches us to trust in Jehovah in any situation.—Nehemiah 2:3-8.

ANSWERS

- A. cupbearer, Artaxerxes.
—Nehemiah 1:11; 2:1.
- B. "Jah Comforts."
- C. "... for good."—Nehemiah 13:31.

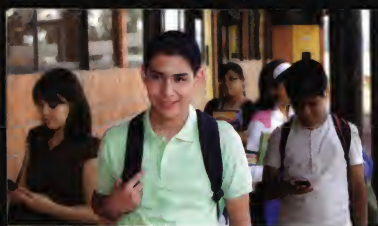
Peoples and Lands

3. Our names are Taonga, aged 6, and Mwelwa, aged 8. We live in Zambia. About how many of Jehovah's Witnesses live in Zambia? Is it 90,000, 152,000, or 196,000?
4. Which dot shows where we live? Circle it, draw a dot where you live, and see how close you are to Zambia.

Children's Picture Search

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.





To Help You Succeed at School

- How can I cope with classroom stress?
- How can I improve my grades?
- How can I get along with a difficult teacher?
- How can I reach my goals?

Those are just some of the topics discussed in *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volumes 1 and 2.

In these books you will also find Bible-based advice on your friendships, your emotions, and your relationships with those of the opposite sex.

You may request a copy by filling out the coupon below and mailing it to an appropriate address on page 5 of this magazine.



☐ Without obligation, I request a copy of *Young People Ask*, Volume 1.

☐ Without obligation, I request a copy of *Young People Ask*, Volume 2.

Indicate which language.

☐ Please contact me concerning a free home Bible study.

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